

HOUSE BILL 446
By Fowlkes

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 37,
and other provisions of Tennessee Code
Annotated, as necessary, relative to children and
families.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 37-1-402, is amended by deleting subsection (a) in its entirety and by substituting instead the following new subsection:

(a) The purpose of this part is to safeguard and enhance the welfare of children and preserve family life by preventing the maltreatment of children, by strengthening the ability of families to parent their children, and by investigating maltreatment where it is suspected to have occurred. It is intended that investigations of suspected maltreatment shall be one way to fulfill this purpose, in conjunction with the assessment of children and families who may be in need of services and the provision of community-based services to families to prevent future maltreatment of children. It is further intended that the department perform its function under this part pursuant to the belief that families can change the circumstances associated with imminent risk to a child when they are provided with intensive, comprehensive services tailored to their strengths and needs. The fundamental assumptions are that most children are better off with their own families than in substitute care and that separation has detrimental effects on both parents and children. Where possible, then, preservation of the family serves as the framework for services, but in any case the best interests of the child shall be paramount.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.